

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between Hughes Electronics and EchoStar Communications. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in HARAHAN, LA which sells the DIRECTV satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

None of my customers can receive their local broadcast channels via satellite. Currently, DIRECTV offers service in only 43 markets. This is a source of frustration for my customers. The proposed merger between HUGHES and EchoStar would allow the combined company to offer local broadcast channels in all 210 television markets nationwide by eliminating the duplication of identical programming carried by both services. If the merger is approved, satellite TV will be a more competitive alternative to cable, and this is good for business.

Today's fledgling satellite Internet services are too expensive for everyday customers, leaving cable providers in control of the broadband market. The new company will have the spectrum and satellite resources necessary to provide consumers across the country with a competitive high-speed Internet alternative, and my customers will have more choice in broadband providers.

This merger will increase satellite TV's ability to respond competitively to the roll out of digital cable, forcing cable companies to respond in a variety of ways including accelerating their digital upgrades and extending their wires out to reach those customers they currently do not serve. The resulting expansion in digital capabilities across the board will increase competition generally, will drive hardware upgrades for consumers, and drive retail traffic and sales nationwide.

High Definition Television (HDTV) was supposed to be available to the American public today, but consumers are still waiting for broadcasters and cable operators to provide the service. HUGHES and EchoStar have pledged to use some of the spectrum made available by their merger to increase their HDTV channel offerings, to at least twelve HDTV channels. I am excited because greater availability of HDTV programming will translate into more sales opportunities for my HDTV televisions and related products.

The new company will offer many benefits to customers, but the most important one is local broadcast channels via satellite in all U.S. television markets. This is the one service most sought after by my customers. I urge you to support the proposed merger between HUGHES and EchoStar because local channels for all Americans is only possible if the companies are allowed to combine.

Sincerely,

BRIAN DOUBLEDAY
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HARAHAN, LA 70123